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Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
---------- 064918
R 180947Z MAR 76
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2851
INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL ADANA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
AMCONSUL IZMIR
USMISSION USUN
USMISSION USNATO
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ANKARA 2095

EXDIS

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PLOS, TU, GR
SUBJECT: APPROACH TO AEGEAN DISPUTE

REF: ANKARA 2068 DTG 170824Z MAR 76 AND PREVIOUS (NOTAL)

1. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT THE PRINCIPAL DANGER OF A TURKISH-GREEK WAR LIES NOT REPEAT NOT IN CYPRUS BUT IN THE AEGEAN, WHERE THE TWO COUNTRIES ARE FACE-TO-FACE AND WHERE THEIR COMPETITION INVOLVES POTENTIAL ECONOMIC RESOURCES AND SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS OF GREATER SIGNIFICANCE TO BOTH. IF A CONFRON-TATION OVER THE AEGEAN GETS OUT OF CONTROL, THE RESULT WOULD NOT BE A WAR BY PROXY, AS IN CYPRUS, BUT THE DIRECT ENGAGEMENT
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OF TWO NATO ALLIES USING THEIR WESTERN EQUIPMENT AND WESTERN

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TRAINING AGAINST TARGETS THAT, WHETHER GREEK OR TURKISH, HAVE HERETOFORE REPRESENTED STRENGTH FOR NATO. GIVEN THE FIGHTING CAPABILITIES OF BOTH SIDES AND THEIR MUTUAL SENSE OF MANY BITTER SCORES TO BE SETTLED, A CONFLAGRATION BETWEEN THEM, EVEN A SHORT ONE, IS LIKELY TO BE BLOODY AND DEVASTATING. SUCH A CONFLAGRATION WOULD NOT ONLY DESTROY THIS END OF NATO BUT WOULD ALSO, QUITE OBVIOUSLY, SEND EXTREMELY DAMAGING SHOCKWAVES THROUGHOUT THE NORTH ATLANTIC ALLIANCE.

2. EVEN IF THE DANGER OF WAR IS CONTAINED, THE PERSISTENT AEGEAN PROBELM CAN CREATE MAJOR DIFFICULTIES FOR THE U.S. AND NATO. AS AN INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL DISPUTE, THIS GREEK-TURKISH CONTEST THREATENS TO STRAIN FURTHER OUR RELATIONS WITH BOTH GREECE AND TURKEY, TO ADD NEW AND HIGHER OBSTACLES TO THE TWO COUNTRIES' COOPERATION WITHIN NATO, AND TO OPEN POSSIBLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE EXPANSION OF THE SOVIETS' POSITION IN THE AREA.
IT IS CLEAR THAT NEITHER OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENTS OF GREECE AND TURKEY WANTS WAR OVER THE AEGEAN. BOTH HAVE STRONG NATIONAL INTERESTS IN MAINTAINING PEACE, AND BOTH HAVE COOL-HEADED AND RESPONSIBLE LEADERS. BUT BOTH MUST CONTEND WITH A PRESS AND WITH POLITICAL OPPORTUNISTS WHICH APPEAR TO FEEL THAT COMBATIVE "SUPER PATRIOT" STANCES SELL PAPERS AND WIN VOTES. MOREOVER, BOTH SUFFER FROM A VISCERAL TRUCULENCE TOWARD ONE ANOTHER, A SENSE THAT THEIR ANCIENT CONFLICT HAS STILL NOT BEEN FOUGHT OUT. IF EITHER SIDE IS PLACED IN A POSITION FROM WHICH IT CANNOT BACK DOWN, THIS BASIC ANIMOSITY -- FANNED BY THE SUPER-PATRIOTS ON BOTH SIDES -- COULD PREVAIL OVER GOOD JUDGMENT. AND GIVEN THE TENDENCY OF BOTH SIDES TO PLAY "CHICKEN" IN THEIR POLICY MANEUVERING, THE CHANCE IS VERY REAL THAT SOONER OR LATER ONE OR THE OTHER WILL BE IN A POSITION WHERE IT WILL BE UNABLE TO BACK DOWN.

4. ANOTHER SOURCE OF DANGER IS THAT IF TURKEY SEES ITS GENERAL MILITARY STRENGTH -- PARTICULARLY ITS AIR STRENGTH -- DECLINING RELATIVE TO THAT OF GREECE, THE RISK OF A PREEMPTIVE STRIKE BY TURKEY (IN THE SENSE OF A SURPRISE INITIATION OF HOSTILITIES AGAINST SELECTED MILITARY TARGETS OR GREEK ISLANDS) WILL INCREASE. TURKISH LEADERS HAVE TWICE WARNED US OF THIS POSSIBLE CONSE-QUENCE OF THE CONTINUATION OF OUR ARMS EMBARGO. AT THIS MOMENT, AS A RESULT OF THE PARTIAL LIFTING OF THE EMBARGO,
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THE IMMEDIATE THREAT TO TURKISH AIR STRENGTH HAS APPARENTLY RECEDED, BUT THE DANGER OF THIS TYPE OF THINKING REMAINS.

5. AS THE GOT PRESENTLY VIEWS THE SITUATION, THE CLEAREST AND MOST PROXIMATE DANGER OF ALL IS THAT GREECE WILL DECLARE AN EXTENSION OF ITS TERRITORIAL WATERS TO 12 MILES. TURKEY HAS REPEATEDLY MADE CLEAR THAT SUCH AN EXTENSION WOULD BE CASUS BELLI,

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BECAUSE IT WOULD CREATE ZONES OF INTERLOCKING TERRITORIAL WATERS AROUND ISLANDS THAT WOULD CLOSE OFF THE AEGEAN FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN. BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE OPPOSITION ARE CONCERNED THAT THE CURRENT LAW OF THE SEA (LOS) CONFERENCE IN NEW YORK WILL PRODUCE AN INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT ON TERRITORIAL SEAS THAT WILL ENCOURAGE GREECE TO DECLARE A 12 MILE LIMIT. THE WAVE OF HIGH-LEVEL PUBLIC STATEMENTS IN TURKEY DURING THE LAST SEVERAL DAYS IS PRIMARILY, WE BELIEVE, AN EFFORT TO WARN THE LOS CONFEREES AGAINST A RESOLUTION THAT COULD LEAD TO AN AEGEAN WAR.

6. STILL ANOTHER DANGER FACTOR IN THE CURRENT SITUATION IS TURKEY'S ISLOATION. IF THE WESTERN WORLD PERSISTS IN ISOLATING TURKEY, IN MAKING IT FEEL THAT IT IS A PARIAH, AT SOME POINT THE TURKS MAY FEEL THEY HAVE LITTLE TO LOSE IN BEHAVING LIKE A PARIAH.

7. BOTH TURKEY AND GREECE CONFRONT THE AEGEAN WITH A DANGEROUS COMBINATION OF VITAL INTERESTS AND AROUSED POPULAR FEELING. WE HAVE NOTED IN EMBASSY ATHENS' REPORTING THAT THE GREEKS FEEL THAT THEY HAVE BEEN PUSHED AROUND BY THE TURKS ABOUT AS MUCH AS THEY ARE GOING TO BE, THAT THEY ARE STRONGLY COMMITTED ON THE AEGEAN ISSUE, AND THAT THEY ARE IN NO MOOD TO BACK AWAY FROM WHAT THEY REGARD AS TURK EXPANIONIST PRESSURE. SIMILARLY, THE TURKS HAVE THEIR OWN REASONS FOR FRUSTRATION AND INTRANSIGENCE. THEY RESENT GREECE'S SUCCESS IN EXPANDING ITS TERRITORY IN THE LAST CENTURY AND A HALF, AND THEY BELIVE THAT GREECE NOW WANTS TO CONTINUE ITS EXPANSION INTO "THE LAST FRONTIER", THE SEA. IN 1923 AND AGAIN IN 1947, TURKEY ACQUIESCED IN TREATIES THAT GAVE GREECE AEGEAN ISLANDS A STONE'S THROW OFF TURKEY'S SHORE. SHOCKED INTO A BELATED APPRECIATION OF THE AEGEAN BY THE THASSOS OIL DISCOVERIES, AND ANGERED BY GREECE'S TREATY VIOLATIONS IN MILITARIZING THE OFF-SHORE ISLANDS, TURKS ARE NOW TRUCULENTLY DETERMINED NOT TO
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LET GREECE OUT-MANEUVER THEM AGAIN. THEY WILL NOT PERMIT, NO MATTER WHAT THE CONSEQUENCES, GREEK ISLAND SOVEREIGNTIES DENYING THE TURKS A SIGNIFICANT ANATOLIAN CONTINENTAL SHELF OR TURNING THE AEGEAN INTO A GREEK LAKE TO BE USED ONLY AT GREEK SUFFERENCE. TURKS ASK THEMSELVES WHY, WHEN THERE ARE 40 MILLION TURKS AND 9 MILLION GREEKS, THEY SHOULD PUT UP WITH EITHER OF THESE CONSEQUENCES.

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
---------- 065216
R 180947Z MAR 76
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
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AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
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8. AGAINST THAT BACKGROUND, FORMER TURKISH PRIME MINISTER ECEVIT AND THE TURKISH OPPOSITION HAVE BEEN ISSUING A SERIES OF STATEMENTS WHICH IN EFFECT CHALLENGE THE GOVERNMENT TO A CONTEST OF NATIONALISM ON THE AEGEAN QUESTION. AT THE SAME TIME, THE GOVERNMENT HAS ENBARKED ON STEPS WHICH, WHILE SO FAR FAIRLY RESTRAINED, CARRY RISK OF PROVOKING GREECE. ONE STEP IS THE NAVAL AND AIR FORCE EXERCISES IN THE AEGEAN WHICH HAVE THE APPARENT AIM OF ASSERTING TURKEY'S LEGAL POSITION. ALTHOUGH THESE EXERCISES HAVE BEEN CAREFULLY ARRANGED AND CONTROLLED, THEY OBVIOUSLY CREATE A POSSIBILITY OF INCIDENTS. ANOTHER STEP IS THE GOT'S ANNOUNCED EFFORT TO OUTFIT A TURKISH SHIP, THE HORA, FOR SEISMIC EXPLORATION IN THE AEGEAN (SEE SEPTEL,.

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9. LITERALLY ALL LEGAL ASPECTS OF THE AEGEAN, FROM SEABED TO AIR SPACE, ARE IN DISPUTE. BUT IRONICALLY -- AND PERHAPS

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TRAGICALLY -- THE MOST STUBBORN PROBLEM OF ALL SEEMS TO BE
THE METHOD OF DISPUTE SETTLEMENT. EXPLORATORY BILATERAL TALKS
SO FAR HAVE GOTTEN NOWHERE, EVEN ON THE COMPARATIVELY SIMPLE
PROBLEM OF THE FLIGHT IDENTIFCATION REGION (FIR). AS REGARDS
THE BASIC ISSUE OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF, GREECE
INSISTS ON REFERRAL TO THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE (ICJ),
THE TURKS ON EXTENSIVE BILATERAL NEGOTIATION BEFORE REFERRAL OF
THE REMAINING ISSUES TO THE ICJ. TURKISH OFFICIALS WITH
WHOME WE HAVE DISCUSSED THIS PROBLEM SAY THAT THE GOT
BELIEVES IT HAS A GOOD LEGAL CASE TO TAKE THE COURT, BUT THAT
IT IS CONCERNED THAT MANY YEARS WOULD PASS BEFORE A FINAL
ARRANGMENT WAS REACHED. THERE MAY WELL BE, OF COURSE,
OTHER REASONS FOR THEIR REFUSAL TO TAKE THE CASE AS IT NOW STANDS
TO THE COURT, SUCH AS THE POSSIBLY GREATER ADVANTAGES THAT THEY
WOULD HOPE TO SECURE IN BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS.

10. IT IS THIS DISPUTE OVER HOW TO SETTLE THE DISPUTE THAT WILL
MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR THE U.S. OR ANY OTHER THIRD PARTY TO PLAY A
CONSTRUCTIVE, EVEN-HANDED ROLE IN HEADING OFF A CONFLICT. TO
URGE TURKEY TO PROCEED WITH SUBMITTING THE CASE TO THE ICJ, OR
TO STOP ITS ASSERTIONS OF LEGAL CLAIMS IN THE AEGEAN, IS TO FAVOR
GREECE IN TURKISH EYES. CONVERSELY, WE ASSUME THAT TO URGE
GREECE TO NEGOTIATE SEROUSLY WITH TURKEY PRIOR TO GOING TO THE ICJ,
OR TO REFAIN FROM DECLARING A 12-MILE TERRITORIAL SEA, IS TO
TAKE A PRO-TURKISH POSITION IN GREEK EYES.

11. IN THIS SITUATION, HOWEVER, IT SEEMS TO US THAT THE DANGEROUS
TREND OF DEVELOPMENTS IS LIKELY TO MAKE IT ESSENTIAL FOR GREECE
TO ACCEPT BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO WAR.
CLEARLY, IT WOULD INCREASE THE SAFETY OF THE REGION IF THOSE
NEGOTIATIONS WERE ACCEPTED SOONER RATHER THAN LATER. FURTHERMORE,
IF THERE IS TO BE ANY CHANCE FOR MEDIATION, OR OTHER THIRD
PARTY ASSISTANCE, A FORMAL NEGOTIATING FRAMEOWRK NEEDS TO BE
ESTABLISHED. (IN THIS CONNECTION, WE ARE CONCERNED THAT THE
NEXT SESSION OF THE BERN TALKS WILL EXHAUST THE LIMTED
POSSIBILITIES INHERENT IN A SIMPLE "EXCHANGE OF VIESS".)

12. ACCORDINGLY, AND SUBJECT TO VIEWS OF EMBASSY ATHENS, WE
SUGGET THAT AN EVEN-HANDED APPROACH FOR THE U.S. MIGHT BE
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A COMBINATION OF THE FOLLOWING THREE ELEMENTS:

A. SUPPORTING THE EARLY INITIAITON OF FORMAL BILATERAL
NEGOTIATIONS ON ALL ASPECTS OF THE AEGEAN DISPUTE, LOOKING
TOWARD EVENTUAL REFERRAL TO THE ICJ OF ANY MATTERS WHICH THE
PARTIES CANNOT SETTLE;

B. URGING BOTH SIDES TO REFRAIN FROM ANY PROVOCATIVE ACTS
AND TO ACCOOMMODATE EACH OTHER'S OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

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WHILE THE NEGOTIATIONS ARE IN PROGRESS ON THE UNDERSTANDING
THAT SUCH ACCOMMODATION WOULD BE WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO LEGAL
CLAIMS; AND

C. URGING NO EXTENSIONS OF PRESENT CLAIMS IN THE AEGEAN
BY EITHER SIDE PENDING THE RESULTS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS AND A
POSSIBLE COURT DECISION.

13. WE ALSO SUGGEST CONSIDERATION OF RECOMMENDING TO BOTH
SIDES THAT THEY SEEK THE ASSISTANCE OF A THIRD PARTY IN THE
NEGOTIATIONS. THE THIRD PARTY'S ROLE COULD INCLUDE:

A) REFEREEING TO HOLD BOTH SIDES TO "GOOD FAITH" NEGOTIATIONS
(AS CALLED FOR IN THE ICJ'S NORTH SEA DECISION) PRIOR TO SUBMISSION
OF THE DISPUTE TO THE ICJ, B) ASSISTING THE PARTIES IN IDENTIFYING
AREAS OF AGREEMENT AND DISAGREEMENT, AND C) FINALLY PARTICIPATING
IN THE PREPARATION OF A COMPROMIS FOR THE ICJ, IF NECESSARY.
WE FULLY SUPPORT AMBASSADOR KUBISCH'S RECOMMENDATION (IN A
LETTER TO THE DEPARTMENT) THAT THE POLICY PLANNING STAFF SEEK TO
DEVELOP POSSIBLE FORMULAS WHICH A MEDIATOR (NOT NECESSARILY A
U.S. MEDIATOR) MIGHT BE ABLE TO DRAW UPON IN ASSITING THE TWO
SIDES TO FIND A SOLUTION.

14. WE RECOMMEND THAT THE SECRETARY USE THE OCCASION OF
FONMIN CAGLAYANGIL'S WASHINGTON VISIT TO CONVEY THE POSITION
OUTLINED IN PARA 12 TO THE TURKISH SIDE. AGAIN SUBJECT TO VIEWS OF
EMBASSY ATHENS, WE ALSO RECOMMEND A U.S. DEMARCHE IN ATHENS
ALONG THE SAME LINES.

15. AT THE SAME TIME, IN VIEW OF THE EXPLOSIVE IMPLICATION FOR THE
AEGEAN OF THE LOS CONFERENCE'S HANDLING OF THE TERRITORIAL SEA ISSUE,

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I URGE THAT THE USG AKE WHATEVER ACTION IS APPROPRIATE TO HEAD OFF
THE SORT OF TERRITORIAL SEA RESOLUTION THAT WOULD RESULT IN FORCING
TURKEY'S HAND. THUS, IF A 12 MILE LIMIT IS ADOPTED, IT IS ESSENTIAL
THAT IT BE ACCOMPANIED BY A STATED CAVEAT THAT
SITUATIONS LIKE THE AEGEAN ARE EXEMPT FROM BLANKET FORMULAS AND
MUST BE THE SUBJECT OF SPECIALIZED SOLUTIONS.
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